



## Youth violence and the City's "Blueprint for Action"

### PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE

From 2003-2006, Minneapolis saw a surge in violent crime. That spike was in large part due to a significant rise in violent crime involving young people, with approximately half of the total arrests citywide involving juvenile offenders.

Eighty Minneapolis residents between the ages of 15 and 24 years died as a result of homicide from 2003-2006. Homicide was the leading cause of death for Minneapolis residents in this age group, accounting for almost half of all deaths.

In response, the City of Minneapolis worked to address youth violence on two fronts. Mayor R.T. Rybak, City Council and a host of community partners created the "Blueprint for Action," a comprehensive, multifaceted, community-based plan to prevent youth violence. Part and parcel with the creation of the Blueprint was the reinstitution of the Juvenile Crime Unit and the Juvenile Criminal Apprehension Team by the Minneapolis Police Department.

### "BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION: A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH"

City and community leaders recognized that preventing violence demands not only a long-term commitment but a comprehensive set of strategies and new partnerships. These combined efforts must focus on prevention and not solely on aggressive responses to violence.

To effectively address the epidemic of juvenile crime, the Blueprint for Action Task Force declared that Minneapolis must address youth violence as a public health issue and implement a comprehensive plan that engages the entire community to address the root causes of youth violence. The public health approach involves the application of its techniques of risk-factor analysis and prevention to the problem of violence. Public health's analytic approach to problems concentrates on identifying risk factors that become the focus of prevention efforts.

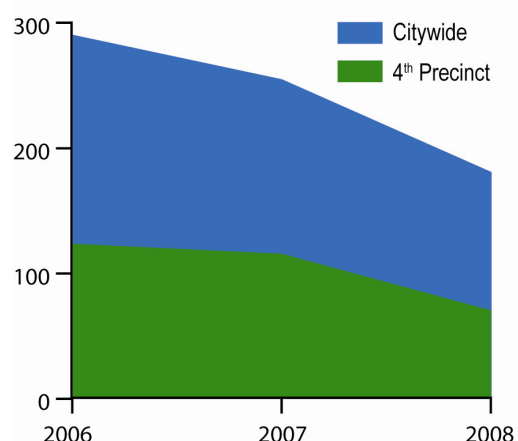
#### Blueprint's core objectives

- Connecting every youth with a trusted adult.
- Intervening at the first sign that youth are at risk for violence.
- Restoring youth who have gone down the wrong path.
- Unlearning the culture of violence in our community.

The Blueprint is designed to be a citywide effort to reduce incidents of youth violence. However, the initial focus of resources was on four key neighborhoods that the data indicated experienced the highest levels of juvenile related violent crime. All four are all within the 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct on the north side of Minneapolis.

Recent statistics indicate that the array of prevention programs, coupled with increased law enforcement, is beginning to have an impact on youth violence. In 2008, there was a 43-percent reduction in youth violence in the 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct from the high recorded in 2006. Statistics also indicate that the same reduction in violence occurring in North Minneapolis is also occurring across the city.

### Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests



### Engaging at-risk youth

The Blueprint's emphasis is on Minneapolis youth ages 8 to 17, particularly those who:

- Have been brought to the Juvenile Center for curfew or truancy violations.
- Are in family situations that are unstable.
- Have had one or more encounters with law enforcement or the justice system.
- Are associated with gangs or gang activity.
- Have been suspended or expelled from school.
- Are themselves victims or witnesses of violence.

### School Resource Officers

Among the recommendations of the Blueprint was the reinstitution of the Minneapolis Police Department's School Resource Officers to work directly with many young residents. These officers go beyond enforcement as they form positive relationships with students, parents, teachers and administrators at high schools and middle schools throughout the City. Through this close contact with students, School Resource Officers guide those who need assistance toward a full comprehensive array of community services that help students gain the life skills necessary to become positive, contributing members of their school and community.

## FOCUSING ON YOUNG OFFENDERS

A renewed focus on truancy, curfew and other low-level offenses by the MPD and the Hennepin County Juvenile Supervision Center helps redirect youth away from further contact with the judicial system and prevent more serious crime.

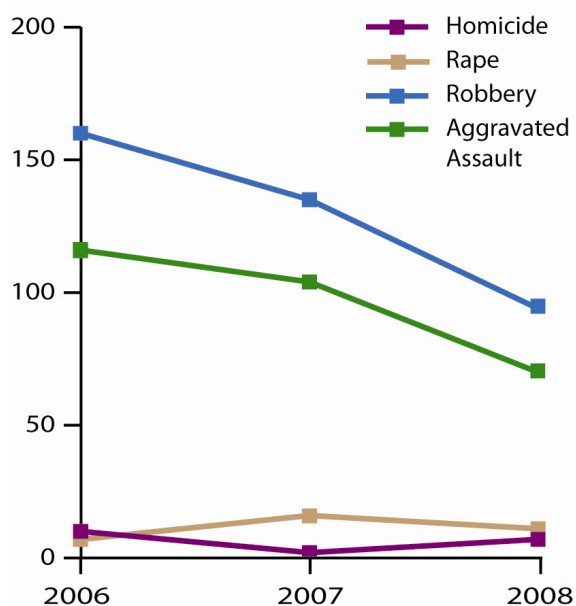
### Juvenile Crime Unit

Minneapolis Police's Juvenile Crime Unit provides the needed coordination between police, county probation, the courts and the schools. This crime unit makes it possible for the City to investigate, arrest, and successfully adjudicate more juvenile offenders. Young offenders are also connected to social service programs, such as mentoring partnerships and youth employment opportunities that help get them back on the right path and reconnect them with their communities.

### Juvenile Criminal Apprehension Team

Along with the crime unit, the Juvenile Criminal Apprehension Team identifies and intervenes with the most aggressive young offenders. This specialized group combines police officers, the U.S. Marshal, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and probation officers to apprehend the most serious juveniles and keep communities safe.

## Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests



## MORE INFORMATION

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For more information on the Blueprint for Action and youth violence prevention, visit [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/yvp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/yvp).